



AsianWeek
.com

HOME

FEATURE

NATIONAL

BAY AREA

BUSINESS

SPORTS

ARTS & ENT.

OPINION



Calendar



Talk-Talk



Archives



Media Kit



Contact Us



[Click for our latest cover](#)



[Buy our Year of the Snake poster!](#)

AW



NATIONAL & WORLD NEWS STORY

[Home](#) | [National & World News Section](#)

Oct. 12 - Oct. 18, 2001

Honda and the NFL



Congressman brings messages of tolerance to congress, and major league sports

On Oct. 4, Congressmen Mike Honda and Christopher Shays unveil a resolution condemning violence and bigotry against Sikh Americans in Washington D.C. Local Sikh community members came out to show support. Photo courtesy of Mike Honda's Office.

By AsianWeek Staff

Hamad Raza's Connecticut store is vandalized, the windows shattered by a 60-pound rock. A Somali Muslim woman in Washington state is attacked by three men who shout that they hate her religion. Outside the Arizona gasoline station he owned, Balbir Shingh Sochi is shot and killed.

Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Arab American and South Asian American communities have been targets of a violent backlash. Sikh Americans, because of their traditional garb, have bore the brunt of the hate.

Last week, Congressman Mike Honda, D-Calif., joined with fellow Congressman Christopher Shays, R-Conn., to introduce a resolution condemning bigotry and violence against Sikh Americans in the wake of the terrorist attacks on New York City and the Pentagon.

"I am hopeful that with the voice of Congress, we can inform all those who would target their fellow Americans simply because of their appearance or faith, that acts of hatred and brutality will never stand and will not be tolerated," Honda said.

TOP STORIES

[APIAs Respond to the War on Terrorism](#)
(in National News)

[Korean American Senior Survey Finds New Needs](#)
(in Bay Area News)

[Normalizing Trade Relations With Vietnam](#)
(in Business)

[Apocalypse Right Now](#)
(in A&E)

[Afghan Opposition Made of Bitter Rivals](#)
(in Opinion)

According to spokesperson Ernest Baynard, Honda immediately began holding interfaith meetings at the community level after the attacks happened last month.

“There is a sizeable Sikh community in the South Bay who came to the meetings and expressed their deep concern for the safety of their families,” Baynard said. “Even though Sikhs are one-sixth of one percent of the nation’s population, they are the ones being killed.”

According to Baynard, the Sikh community asked if Honda could do something for them, and he came up with this resolution.

“We hope this will be a powerful national message that this kind of hate violence will not be tolerated,” Baynard said.

Currently, the bill has 119 co-sponsors from congressional leaders across the political spectrum. Honda hopes the resolution will pass through quickly. Illinois Senator Dick Durbin, R-Ill., has also introduced a similar measure in the Senate.

Along with the legislation, Honda has also helped to pull together a media campaign promoting tolerance that will air during national sporting events. The message — a 30-second spot urging tolerance and respect for diversity by featuring images of professional and youth football players of diverse backgrounds embracing and picking each other up — first aired during Monday Night Football on Oct. 8.

Honda contacted NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue and asked for help in delivering “a powerful message of tolerance.”

Honda first conceived of the idea of using professional sporting events as a vehicle for a message of unity when he learned that “God Bless America” would be sung instead of the traditional “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” during the 7th Inning Stretch at Major League Baseball games.

In addition to creating the NFL spot, Tagliabue will join with Detroit Lions General Manager, Matt Milken, in visiting a Detroit-area High School that is 85 percent Arab American. Tagliabue and Milken will meet with their football team, that is 96 percent Arab American, about issues of tolerance and to hear their concerns.

Major League soccer was the first to agree to Honda’s request, and has been airing messages of tolerance during playoff games since last week. Major League Baseball is currently developing their own message to play during the World Series.

“As we send the young men and women of our Armed Forces into harm’s way to combat terrorism, professional sport, now more than ever, has a unique and powerful access to a vast number of Americans and continues to be a tradition that brings us together

and allows us to briefly return to normal," Honda said.

[Top of This Page](#) ▲

[National News Section](#) ▲

[AsianWeek Home](#) ▲▲

[Feature](#) | [National](#) | [Bay Area](#) | [Business](#)

[Sports](#) | [Arts & Entertainment](#) | [Opinion](#)

©2001 AsianWeek. The information you receive on-line from AsianWeek is protected by the copyright laws of the United States. The copyright laws prohibit any copying, redistributing, retransmitting, or repurposing of any copyright protected material. [Privacy Statement](#)